

city is full of usurers, and that the ordinary rate is 10 per cent, or more/'^{ri} The magistrates renewed their remonstrances. They had seen without a shudder an adulterer condemned to be hanged, and had mercifully commuted his sentence to scourging through the town, followed by ten years' imprisonment in chains.⁷⁷

But at the godly proposal to make capitalists die the death of Achan their humanity blenched. Besides, the punishment was not only cruel, but dangerous. In

Geneva "most men are debtors/' If they are allowed to taste blood, who can say where their fury will end?

Yet, such is the power of the spoken word, the magistrates did not venture on a blunt refusal, but gave scripture for scripture. They informed the ministers

that they proposed to follow the example of David, who, when rebuked by Nathan, confessed his fault. Whether the ministers replied in the language of Nathan, we are not informed.

Recent political theory has been prolific in criticisms of the omniscient State. The principle on which the collectivism of Geneva rested may be described as that of the omniscient Church.⁷⁸

The religious "community formed a closely organized society, which, while using the secular 'authorities as police officers to enforce its mandates, not only instructed them as to the policy to be

pursued, but was
itself a kind of State, prescribing by its own
legislation
the standard of conduct to be observed by its
members,
putting down offences against public order
and public
morals, providing for the education of
youth and for
the relief of the poor. The peculiar
relations between
the ecclesiastical and secular authorities,
which for a
short time made the system possible at
Geneva, could
not exist to the same degree when
Calvinism was the
creed, not of a single city, but of a minority in
a national
State organized on principles quite
different from its
own. Unless the State itself were
captured, rebellion,
civil war, or the abandonment of the
pretension to